

JOURNALISTS LAUNCH FIRST NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY IN IRAQ

WASHINGTON, AUGUST 20 -- As media outlets in Iraq proliferated, a group of Iraqi journalists recognized a need for a professional, nationwide news agency. With assistance from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), in October 2005, the group launched the National Iraqi News Agency (NINA). The new agency's goal is to help Iraqi media outlets provide audiences with impartial, accurate information.

"Iraq needs an independent, professional news agency," said Dr. Ayer, a veteran reporter and co-founder of NINA. "Creating NINA is a challenge, but we believe the agency will grow and become a service very needed by the media."

Iraq's first independent news agency offers news and features that describe in Arabic the country's political, economic and social life. The agency is striving to become synonymous with fair, honest and reliable reporting that Iraqis can trust amid a media landscape overflowing with information -- some unverifiable.

The media professionals who own and operate NINA have been consulting with international news agency managers as they build their own agency. USAID has provided technical assistance and has been helping NINA journalists boost their writing and editing skills, and learn international media standards. USAID also equipped the agency's headquarters in Baghdad, Iraq, with the latest news collection, editing and transmission equipment.

NINA has hired full-time correspondents in Erbil, Hilla Basra and the International Zone in Baghdad, as well as freelance reporters in other parts of the country.

The agency is an important part of USAID's efforts to help strengthen independent media in Iraq with the goal of developing media outlets throughout the country able to provide accurate, high-quality information.

Through training and business development assistance, as well as media law advocacy, USAID is building the foundation for an independent, credible media to grow and flourish in Iraq.

=====

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

GR/ 2006

Note: *A Bangla translation of this article is also available from the American Center. If you are interested in the translation, please call the American Center Press Section (Tel: 8837150-4, Fax: 9885688; e-mail: DhakaPA@state.gov; Website: <http://dhaka.usembassy.gov>)*